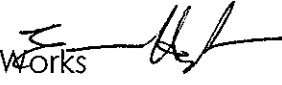




**CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH
PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
REQUEST FOR ACTION**

Item No. PW 10-32

SUBMITTED TO: Chairman Siersema and Members of the Commission
SUBMITTED BY: Travis K. Hopkins, PE, Director of Public Works 
DATE: October 20, 2010
SUBJECT: Retention of Marked Crosswalk at Heil Avenue and Silver Lane/Thames Lane

Statement of Issue: The existing marked crosswalk across the west leg of Heil Avenue and Silver Lane/Thames Lane is being considered for removal due to the discontinuation of the crossing guard service and to discourage pedestrian crossings at that location. State law requires that the public be notified and provided the opportunity to respond prior to the removal of any marked crosswalk.

Funding Source: The recommended action would require expenditure of approximately \$2,000 for the sandblast removal of markings. Work can be accommodated within current Public Works operational budget.

Impact on Future Maintenance Costs: Reduced costs due to incremental decrease in marking maintenance.

Recommended Action: Motion by the Public Works Commission to support the staff recommendation to remove the marked crosswalk at Heil Avenue and Silver Lane/Thames Lane.

Alternative Action(s): Recommend that the existing marked crosswalk be retained.

Analysis: At the Police Department's request, Public Works Transportation staff completed a review of the existing crossing guard locations within the City to determine which locations meet current crossing guard guidelines and to develop recommendations related to continued crossing guard service. One of the locations evaluated was across Heil Avenue and Silver Lane/Thames Lane.

The following general crossing guard guidelines from the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) were considered as part of the evaluation of crossing guard location:

1. **Uncontrolled crossing:** No alternative controlled crossing within 600 feet. Vehicular volume exceeds 350 vehicles during each of any 2 hours in which 40 or more school pedestrians cross daily while going to or from school. If prevailing vehicles speeds exceed 40 mph, the guideline volumes reduce to 300 vehicles and 40 pedestrians.
2. **Stop Controlled Crossings:** Vehicle volumes 500 vehicles/hour on an undivided highway with 4 or more lanes during each of any 2 hours in which 40 or more school pedestrians cross daily while going to or from school.
3. **Traffic Signal Controlled Crossing:** The volume of vehicle turning movements through the crosswalk exceed 300 per hour during each of any two hours in which 40 or more school pedestrians cross daily while going to or from school, or signal operations or conditions warrant crossing assistance based on an engineering study.

The Heil Avenue and Silver Lane/Thames Lane uncontrolled crossing is located 1,400 feet west of Beach Boulevard. According to the previous crossing guard and staff observations, two to four students typically cross at this intersection one day per week in the afternoon (minimum days). Rarely do any other students cross at this location at other days and time periods. The students observed crossing at this location were likely middle school students during their early release day, crossing in the afternoon from south to north. Since Sun View Elementary is north of Heil Avenue it is reasonable to assume that these students did not attend Sun View since they were traveling toward the school in the afternoon. Heil is a four lane divided arterial at this location with a posted speed limit of 40 mph. Any rerouting of this pedestrian traffic would result in significant increases in the walking distance to access an intersection controlled by a traffic signal (Beach Boulevard or Gothard Street).

Since the pedestrian volume is significantly below the minimum guideline and not related to Sun View Elementary, staff recommended that this location be considered for removal of crossing guard assistance. City Council subsequently approved the reduction in crossing guard service as part of the recent contract update.

Marked pedestrian crossings at non-signalized locations are generally unexpected by motorists and should be used only after a thorough evaluation and strong justification exists. Some pedestrians may tend to be less cautious when crossing the street within a marked crosswalk due to the presumption of right-of-way. The signing and markings at crossing locations may give pedestrians a false sense of security. By removing the markings, pedestrians might take more caution to cross the street, or avoid a more difficult crossing location and cross at a signal controlled intersection. Heil Avenue serves approximately 14,000 vehicles per day. Based on vehicle speeds, street width, and traffic volume, encouraging pedestrian traffic to cross the street at signal controlled intersections is preferred. Pedestrian crossings would still be legal at this location even with crosswalk removal. It is expected that pedestrians that would cross at this location would be more likely to exercise greater care in identifying an appropriate gap in traffic and crossing the street.

Staff has also considered the benefits of retaining the marked crosswalk. Crosswalk markings are enhancements at pedestrian crossing locations. The markings provide a visible, delineated location to cross the street, and are recognized by drivers. Advance signage is also used to provide warning to motorists to expect pedestrians at this location. Removing the markings and signage could reduce driver awareness of the potential for pedestrian crossings in the area. However, the historically low use of the crossing may have negated some of this potential benefit since many motorists that use the street regularly probably observed few pedestrians actually using the crosswalk. After examination of the advantages and disadvantages of crosswalk markings at non-signalized locations, staff recommends the removal of the markings at this location.

California law requires a local agency to provide a minimum of 30 days advance notice and an opportunity to be heard by the public prior to removing an existing marked crosswalk. Municipal Code Section 2.111.030(j) establishes the Public Works Commission as the public body authorized to conduct initial public meetings on this subject.

As required by California law public notices have been posted at the existing crosswalk since August 16, 2010, identifying the City's intent to remove the marked crosswalk. Notifications to Ocean View School District were sent on August 11, 2010 informing the district the City's consideration of removing the marked crosswalk on Heil Avenue. Up to the date of preparation of this report

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October 20, 2010
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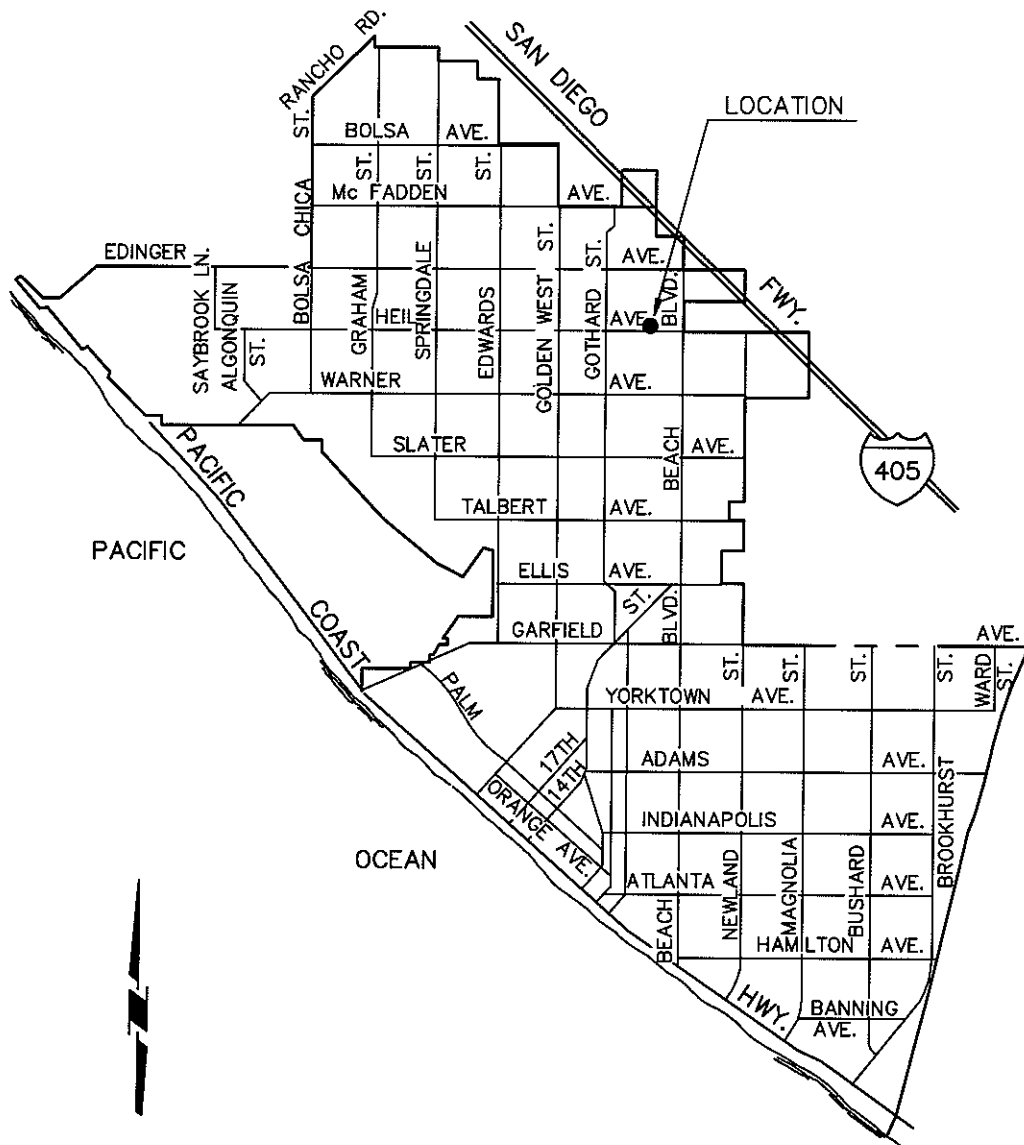
the City has received no written responses. One member of the Ocean View School District School Board did contact staff to inquire about the potential crosswalk removal here and at other locations. The Board member did express general concern about crosswalk removal but did not provide specific feedback regarding this location.

Attachments:

1. Location Map
2. Location Aerial Photo
3. Public Notification Sign

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ATTACHMENT #1



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CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH * PUBLIC WORKS * TRAFFIC ENGINEERING



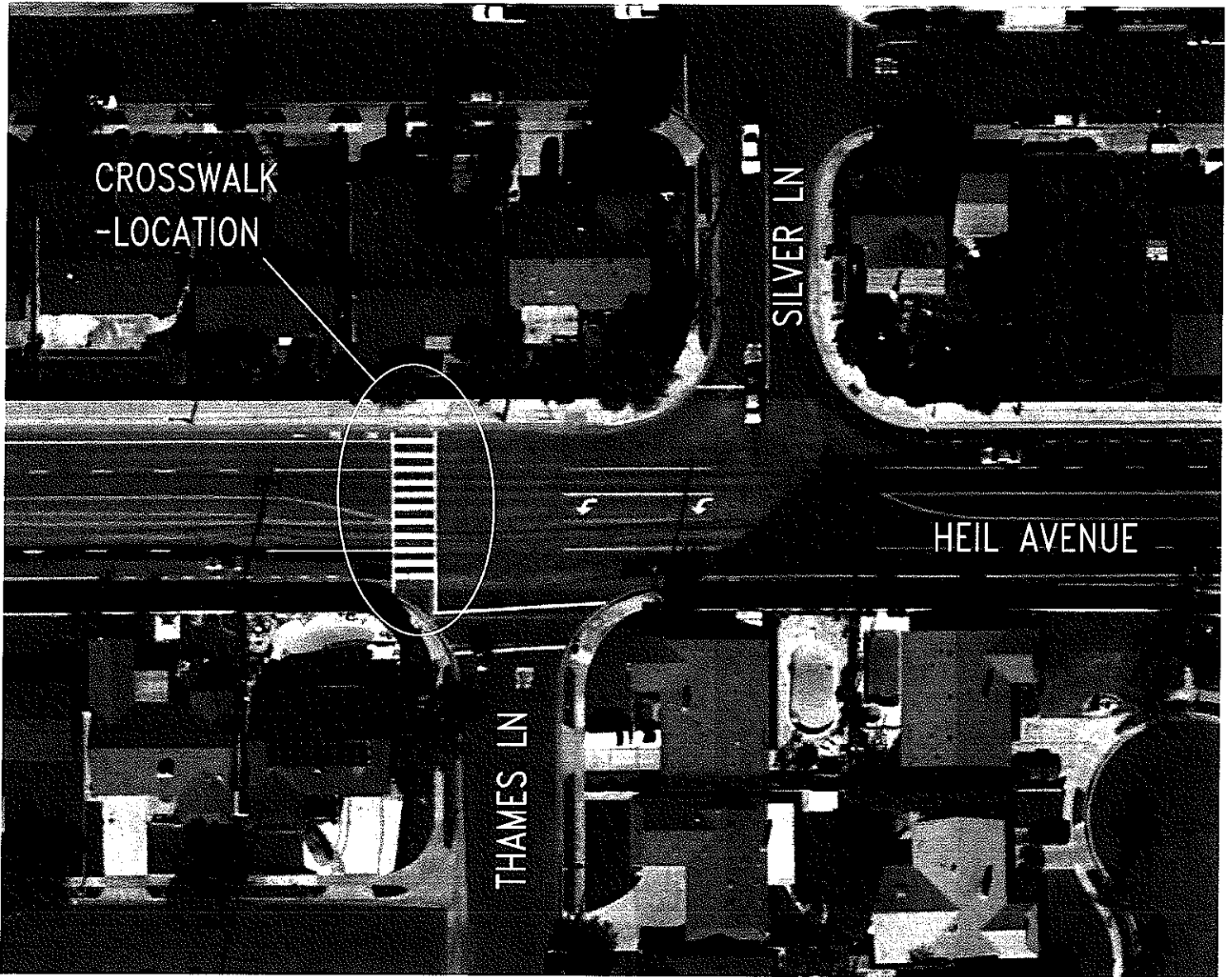
PROJECT LOCATION MAP
HEIL AV AND SILVER LN/THAMES LN

ATTACHMENT

1

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ATTACHMENT #2



G-2⁸

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LOCATION AERIAL PHOTO
HEIL AV AND SILVER LN/THAMES LN

ATTACHMENT

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ATTACHMENT #3

PUBLIC NOTICE

PROPOSED MARKED CROSSWALK REMOVAL

The Public Works Commission of the City of Huntington Beach will consider the permanent removal of THIS MARKED CROSSWALK at its October 20, 2010 regular meeting beginning at 5:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, California. The public is encouraged to attend this meeting to express their opinions regarding the recommended proposed removal or present their opinions in writing.

Written comments may be submitted to:

City of Huntington Beach
Department of Public Works
2000 Main Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

If you have any questions regarding the recommended marked crosswalk removal please call Transportation Engineering at (714) 536-5431

Public Notification Sign

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